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AN EARNEST CALL TO Family-Catechising, AND REFORMATION.

By a Reverend Divine.

The Father to the Children ſhall make known thy truth, Iſai. 38. 19.

Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.--- And ye fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6. 1, 4.

Woe unto thee, O Jeruſalem! [England.] *wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it once be?* Jer. 13. 27.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. W.* for John Dunton, at the *Raven* in the *Poultrey*. 1693.

THE PREFACE.

'WHoever thou art, that wilt condescend to read this little Piece, I think fit to acquaint thee with whatever relates thereunto, from its first conception, to its coming thus into the World. How the poor Thing will thrive now, and what Service this Stripling (of which I must say, Is it not a little One?) is born for, God alone knows, to whose Guardianship, and Disposal I entirely submit it.

'If thou art inquisitive of its Parentage, know, it proceeds from a Stock, Spiritually very mean; and, in that respect, springs *as a Root out of dry Ground:* Yet he that made *Aaron*'s dry Rod to bud and blossom, and bring forth Fruit, can do so by this.

'The Author remembers ſomewhat 'of thoſe former Times, when the Reins 'of Government were not ſo ſlack in *Fa-* 'milies, *profeſſing Chriſtianity*, and when 'there was a more ſtrict, and conſcienti- 'ous Education of Children, than in 'theſe licentious Days, in which many 'Parents out-do the *Oſtrich* in Cruelty, 'and are Spiritually *hardened againſt their* 'young Ones, *as though they were not theirs*, 'Job 39. 16.

'When the Foundation of the Second 'Temple was laid, the young Men ſhou- 'ted for Joy; but the ancient Men wept, 'becauſe the Foundations of the New 'Temple, came ſo much ſhort of the 'former, which they had known in its 'Glory, *Ezra* 3. 12, 13. Methinks I 'find a mixture of both theſe Affections 'in my own Soul, with reſpect to the 'private Families of Chriſtians, which 'ſhould be little Churches. I heartily 'rejoyce to ſee, or hear, even that little 'Meaſure of good Order and Govern- 'ment, that is in any of them; and ve- 'rily, *unleſs the Lord of Hoſts had left a-* 'mong us a very ſmall remnant, *we had* 'been as Sodom, and as Gomorrha, *Iſa.* 1. 9. 'But I ſee, abundantly, more cauſe of 'Mourning, in that the preſent Glory on 'Chriſtian Families, comes ſo much ſhort 'of the Glory of the former.

'How

'How deplorable is the perſonal Ruine of Multitudes, who ſhould be Governours, and governed in Families! For, by reaſon of theſe Neglects, Satan hath made a great Harveſt of Souls, and Hell hath inlarged it ſelf, beyond Meaſure. But, beſides perſonal Conſiderations, how great Diſadvantages have hereby redounded to the Publick. There are little viſible Acceſſions to the Church, from Chriſtian Families. God's *Orchard of Pomgranats*, is meanly Stock'd from theſe Nurſeries: And whence ſhould the Churches Increaſes be primarily expected, but from thoſe on whom God hath laid ſuch ſpecial Obligations, and to whom he has given ſo great Advantages? Moreover, much from the ſame Cauſe it is, that the preſent Age is ſo generally, and fearfully Debauched, that we may truly ſay, *The whole World lyeth in Wickedneſs*; and, *all Fleſh have corrupted their ways*: and take up the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s upbraiding Complaint over *Judah*, *Ah ſinful nation! a people laden with iniquity! a ſeed of evil doers! children that are corrupters! They have forſaken the Lord! they have provoked the holy one of Iſrael to anger! they are gone away backward! The whole head is ſick! the whole heart faint! from the ſole of the*

'*foot, even unto the head; there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores!* Isa. 1. 4, 5, 6. So that both Church and State are sick at Heart, and utter dying Groans under this deadly Malady, the Neglects of Family-Government.

'It has been oft, and much upon my Thoughts, that as the present decays of Religion, and increases of Wickedness, have, in a great measure, come in upon us, at this breach, the neglect of *Family-Order*, and particularly, as to *Catechising*; so it is some effectual revival of that Ordinance, that must lead the way to a thorough Reformation. But I have withal experienced, That there is a sort of Catechising, which is next to nothing, that is, to teach a Catechism meerly by rote, without a familiar Explication, and home Application of it.

'We have Instances left us upon Record in History, of the Churches exemplary Care of her *Catechumens*, in former Ages. And blessed be God, who hath raised up many worthy Ministers, who have, in this our degenerate Age, born a great Testimony unto this Ordinance, tho' they did not live to see it grow so as they desired. That Man of an *Apostolick Spirit*, that underwent such

'La-

'Labours, and had ſuch Succeſs in carrying the Goſpel among the *American* Indians, and was Inſtrumental of thoſe Stones, to raiſe up ſo many Children unto *Abraham*; has this memorable Notion on thoſe Words of our Lord. *Feed my Lambs*; *feed my Sheep*; *feed my Sheep*, Joh. 21. 15, 16, 17. "That the Care of the Lambs, is one "Third Part of the Charge over the "Church of God. A worthy and moſt intimate Friend, who did both expend a good In-come, and ſpend himſelf in the Works of the Lord, and is now taken unto his Reward; I have heard declare, "That if he "could not Preach and "Catechiſe too, he "would rather omit the former, than the "latter: Such a Senſe he had, both of the need, and benefit of Catechiſing: Yea, and in his lingering Sickneſs, he continued Catechiſing after he had laid down preaching. A great Maſter-Builder in his moſt excellent Sermon on this Subject, (which I remember not that I ever read till ſome conſiderable time after I had finiſhed the following Tract) gives in

Mr. John Eliot, *of* New-England; *ſee his Printed Life.*

Mr. Tho. Brand.

Mr. Lye, *Sermon 21. in the Supplement to the Morning-Lecture at* Cripplegate.

' in this great Teſtimony. " Thoſe Ca-
" techiſms that were compos'd by the
" late Reverend Aſſembly of Divines at
" *Weſtminſter*, I have made uſe of both
" in my Congregation and Family, now
" near Thirty years, and I deſire to ſpeak
" it with all humility, and thankfulneſs,
" if ever the Lord ſmiled on my poor La-
" bours, it hath been while I have been
" buſied in this great, uſefull, neceſſary
" Work of Catechiſing, and that out of
" theſe Catechiſms.

' As God hath in our time raiſed up
' many worthy Men, who have laid to
' heart this Duty, and born their Teſti-
' mony unto it: ſo they have likewiſe la-
' boured abundantly for the promoting
' of it, and ſome have left their worthy
' Labours in Print, as a *Legacy* behind
' them: inſomuch that perhaps there ne-
' ver was an Age that had ſo many great
' and advantagious Helps for Catechiſing,
' as this of ours. And tho' neither the
' Practice, nor Succeſs has yet been an-
' ſwerable; yet ſure it is not for nothing,
' that God has put it into the Hearts of
' his Servants to prepare ſuch ſtores of rich
' Materials. I hope it is a good Omen,
' that this Work, and the Succeſs of it,
' ſhall yet revive among us. *David* pre-
' pared Materials, but *Solomon* built the
' Lord's Houſe. Herein may that Saying
' be true, *One ſoweth, and another reapeth.*

' It

'It has been noted that there are of one 'kind or other, about *five hundred Cate-* 'chiſms extant. The Reaſon why I more 'particularly recommend thoſe of our *late* 'Aſſembly, is not that I diſreſpect, or would 'oppoſe any good Catechiſm; but theſe 'are extraordinarily fitted for this purpoſe, 'have had the Eſteem of *Foreign Chur-* 'ches, as well as a general Reception here 'at home. Beſide our Diſſenters, many 'Members, yea, Miniſters of the *Church* 'of England, have approved of, and uſed 'theſe, as agreeable to the genuine Do- 'ctrine of that Church. My Reverend 'Friend, whoſe Pen has given us ſome touches 'on the Life of the greatly uſefull Maſter 'Brand, mentioning the Aſſemblies Catechiſm, ſaith, *The Lord Primate of* Armagh *ſaid, It was the beſt extant.* And what tho' this Catechiſm was among other good Books, not long ſince, ignominiouſly burned, even in one of our Univerſities; yet we need only conſider when, and by whom it was done. This Villany was perpetrated at a time when all our Foundations Civil, and Religious, were out of Courſe; and by ſome wicked Incendiaries, who ſerved that but as they did the *Lord's Prayer*, *Commandments*, and the *Creed*; which are not only incorpo-

See the printed Life of Mr. Brand, *written by Dr.* Annesly.

'rated

'incorporated with, but alſo printed at the 'end of the Catechiſm: And ſo, no doubt, 'they would have ſerved our Lord him-'ſelf, had it been in their power. Theſe 'are not *genuine Sons*, but Monſters, that 'hang on the Breaſt of our Nurſeries of 'Learning. I likewiſe the rather pitch 'upon theſe Catechiſms; becauſe ſo many 'worthy Men have written Explications 'of them, (as I hint elſewhere,) which 'may be ſubſervint to our Uſe of them.

'I have, of late Years, where-ever I have 'had Opportunities, ſet up publick Cate-'chizing, and have conſtantly obſerved it 'to produce evident Tokens of Good, both 'on Young and Old. And Elder People 'have thus expreſſed themſelves to me: '*We anſwer to our ſelves the Queſtions you ask* '*the Younger.* The Method I uſe in publick 'Catechiſing, is this, and I would be glad 'to learn a better. I firſt ask the Catechu-'mens the Queſtions that I particularly in-'ſiſt upon in the Catechiſm, to prove their 'being perfect in the Anſwers. I then put 'further Queſtions to them, (ſuch as are in 'Mr. *Lye*'s and Mr. *Allein*'s Explications of 'the Catechiſm,) to prove their underſtand-'ing the ſence of the Anſwers: And finally, 'I ſumm up all with a more entire Expoſi-'tion; in which I endeavour to be Practi-'cal, as well as Doctrinal. But this I muſt 'ſay, it is the *Queſtionary part*, I mean, 'putting particular Queſtions plainly and 'pathetically

'pathetically upon the Particulars contain'd 'in, or ſome way relating to the Anſwers. 'It is this, I ſay, that I have obſerved to do 'the main Execution. I have alſo laid to 'heart, the great Neceſſity and Benefit of '*Family*, as well as *Publick Catechiſing*. 'And withal conſidering, that ſome might 'omit this, or not perform it to good pur- 'poſe; merely from inability to manage it 'effectually, and for want of Direction how 'they might profitably proceed with it: 'Hereupon I caſt it in my Thoughts, how 'a profitable Method might be propoſed, 'which might be moſt plain and eaſie, both 'to them that Catechize, and to thoſe that 'are Catechiſed in Families. Now the re- 'ſult of theſe Thoughts, is in that follow- 'ing little Treatiſe, which thou art here pre- 'ſented with.

'When I had firſt drawn it up, I pri- 'vately communicated it to ſome few of 'that loving and kind People where then 'I was, and for whoſe ſake I writ it. I af- 'terward ſummoned the Heads of Families 'together, with their young Ones, and 'cauſed it to be read in their Audience, 'exhorting them to proceed in their Fami- 'lies according to the Method which you 'have recommended under the *Fourth* 'Head of the *Third Chapter*. And ſince 'naked Rules are not ſo effectual for In- 'ſtruction, as thoſe that are back'd with 'practical Examples; I appointed ſeveral

'Meetings,

'Meetings, for that purpoſe; and did, 'before them, Catechize their Young Ones, 'not according to the freedom I uſe in my 'publick Exerciſes of that Nature, but 'expreſsly according to that preſcribed 'Method. That is; Firſt, I began with '*Prayer*. Then I asked the young People 'Three Queſtions out of the *Aſſemblies* 'Catechiſm. Next I interrogated them 'more particularly on the Anſwers out of 'Mr. *Lye*'s *Explanation of the Catechiſm*, '(and the ſame, as I have intimated, may 'be done by Mr. *Allein*'s.) Then was read, 'out of Mr. *Thomas Vincent*'s Explicatory 'Catechiſm, what related to the Three 'Anſwers inſiſted on. After which, I 'briefly prayed. We ſung ſome part of a 'Pſalm, and ſo I diſmiſs'd them with a '*Solemn Bleſſing*. Herein we experimentally found a Preſence of God with us; 'as I doubt not but thou wilt do, *Reader*, 'if thou wilt, with thy Family, make Experiment. And I pray thee be not only 'a *Reader*, but *Practitioner*.

'After this, ſeveral that were my Hearers requeſted Copies of my Papers; which 'I could not deny them. Some, both '*Miniſters* and *private Chriſtians*, who 'have peruſed them, moved for their Publication: Which I have now condeſcended to, though, at firſt, I only intended 'them for Private Uſe. In Tranſcribing, 'I have now divided it into *Chapters*, for 'diſtinct-

'distinctneſs ſake, which I had not done 'at firſt; and ſomewhat of Additions and 'Alterations I have made. The laſt Head 'of all, with the Concluſion, had ſome 'particular Aſpect toward that People 'for whom it was firſt pen'd; to whom 'God wonderfully continu'd their Sanctu-'ary-Enjoyments *throughout a very dark 'and cloudy Day.* You have it without 'the Alteration of what related to that 'Circumſtance. But I may here add 'now, That the more general Delive-'rance that God has ſince that time ſo 'wonderfully wrought for theſe Nations, 'and which our Selves and Families are 'Sharers in, ſhould much more be an ef-'fectual Motive to this Duty toward God, 'our Selves and Families.

'And now, whoever thou art, that 'takeſt this *little Book* in hand, thou art 'the Perſon with whom its buſineſs is: '*Read*, *Conſider* and *Practiſe*.

'If any who are honour'd with the 'High Calling of the *Miniſtry*, ſhall 'vouchſafe to caſt an Eye on a thing 'ſo very mean. Let even theſe *Fathers* 'hearken to one Requeſt, from the very 'leaſt of all the Sons of the Prophets: In 'a time when too many are like dumb 'Dogs, that cannot bark; do you, I be-'ſeech you, like faithful Shepherds, rouze 'up your ſelves and your Flocks unto this 'Duty, that they be not deſtroyed for

'lack of Knowledge. Poſſibly you may 'adviſe to a much better Method than I 'have propoſed; which I ſhall not be 'offended at, but rejoyce in. As to that 'by me recommended, I only deſire, that 'all ſuch would uſe it, as have wholly 'neglected this Duty, or are acquainted 'with no better way of performing it.

'You that are *Parents* of *Children*, and '*Governours* of *Families*, conſider the 'Souls committed to your Charge are pre-'cious, and ſhould be ſo to you. As the 'Talent is, ſo the Account will be great. '*It is worth while to perform Duty, though 'without Succeſs*: Yet who knows what 'bleſſed Succeſs may attend *ſincere*, though '*weak* Endeavours. You may thus, early, 'prevent thoſe youthful Extravagances, 'which, like Errors of the firſt Concoction 'in the Body Natural, once admitted, 'are ſeldom cured. If any belonging to 'your Families are in a *courſe of Sin*, who 'knows, but a little Advice, faithfully 'given, may be to them like the *Remora*, 'a little Fiſh, which (they ſay) if it ſtick 'to the greateſt Ship, will put her to a 'ſtop, when under full ſail? Admitting 'ſome be Angling for the World, thy hea-'venly Counſel may be like the *Torpedo*, 'which (it is ſaid) in a ſecret way tranſ-'fuſeth its Vertue to the Rod, and ſo to the 'Hand of the Angler, and makes him let 'it fall. Who knows, but by this means,

'thoſe

'thoſe of thy Family may be made know-
'ing, methodical, well grounded, ſteady,
'*practical Chriſtians* here upon Earth, and
'at laſt become glorious Saints in Heaven.
'What a Bleſſing had that good Man,
'who could comfortably ſay, "I have
"had Six Children, and
"I bleſs God for his *Mr.* Eliot, *of*
"free Grace; they are New-England.
"all either with Chriſt,
"or in Chriſt, and my Mind is now at reſt
"concerning them.

'I can yet condeſcend to offer Argu-
'ments of an inferiour Nature, *if by*
'*any means I may gain ſome.* The Books
'recommended for your Aſſiſtance in Ca-
'techiſing, are very good, yet very cheap;
'very full, yet very brief; very deep, yet
'very plain. Theſe Catechetical Exerci-
'ſes will tend to *ſweeten the very Hu-*
'*mours of the Family*; they will mend the
'Diſcourſes of the Family, at other
'times. They will improve your Chil-
'dren's Underſtanding, advance Parts,
'and accidentally fit for Employments,
'in worldly buſineſs and converſe. This
'will tend to make them better Husbands,
'and to keep, uſe, and improve their E-
'ſtates the better. It will be a means of
'encreaſing *Family-Love*, and promoting
'Obedience. Your Children that are in
'danger to become Rods, yea Scorpions
'to you, may by this means become a

'Staff in your Hand. It is ſaid, "That "eminent Family in *Rome*, received the "Name *Scipio*, from one of their Ance-"ſtors, who was *Scipionis vice*, as a Staff "to his Parents. Such may yours be. The 'Regulation of Chriſtian Families, will 'give a Set-off to Religion, and commend 'it even to a carnal World. *When the 'Queen of Sheba had ſeen the wiſdom of 'Solomon, and the houſe that he had built, 'and the meat of his table, and the ſitting 'of his ſervants, and the attendance of his 'miniſters, and their apparel, and his cup-'bearers alſo, and their apparel, and his a-'ſcent by which he went up into the Houſe of 'the Lord: there was no more ſpirit in her,* '1 *Kings* 10. 4, 5. In a word, by this means, 'may be raiſed up more accompliſh'd In-'ſtruments in Church and State, and both 'dearly need ſuch. You that are Chil-'dren, and the govern'd Part of Families, 'hearken to that Counſel, that out of 'meer good Will, is given you by one that 'wiſheth your Welfare here, and hereaf-'ter. It has been obſerv'd by my intimate 'good Friend, who is 'now with God, "How "the Privileges of the "Infant Seed of Belie-"vers, has been aſſerted "and pleaded for by himſelf, and ſome "others, who had no Children. So here you 'have the good of Children, and Families,

Mr. Joſeph Whiſton *of* Lewes, *in* Suſſex.

'ſought

'ſought and endeavoured by one that hath 'neither Child nor Family. Do not hear-'ken to the deſtroyer of Souls, and turn 'a deaf Ear to ſuch as deſire your Salvati-'on. Read with fear and trembling, '*Prov.* 1. 20. to the end, *Prov.* 5. 11, 12, '13, 14. with other the like Scriptures. 'Many bewail theſe neglects, and the ſad 'conſequences of them, on the *Rack of* '*Conſcience on a Death-Bed*, and ſome in '*Chains*, and at the *Gibbet*: Yea Hell, in 'all the Caverns of it, is filled with hor-'rid Echoes of the doleful Yellings of 'thoſe, who, in vain, torment themſelves 'with ſevereſt Reflections on their Youth-'ful Miſcarriages. If you will rant away 'your time and opportunities here, you 'alſo ſhall roar it out there to all Eterni-'ty. God's Priſon will hold you, if no-'thing will reſtrain you ſhort of it.

"*Grinæus* rejoyced, when he ſaw any "young Perſons im-"proving, and was wont "to ſay, That more "worſhipped the riſing "than the ſetting Sun. Melch. Adam *vit Theol.*

'O what great things may you do for 'God, your own Souls, and the ſucceed-'ing Age: Others muſt quickly ſleep with 'their Fathers. The Children of this 'Age, muſt be the Men and Women of 'the next: 'Tis in, and with you, that "Religion muſt live or dye. There is a

'Promiſe, *Inſtead of the fathers, ſhall be the children, whom thou mayſt make princes in all the earth.* Pſal. 45. 16.

'I have been beſpeaking no leſs of you, than to endeavour, after a truly ſanctified ſaving Knowledge: but if I muſt not prevail in that, yet let me deſire you to get, at leaſt, a notional Knowledge, and it may be, Grace may come afterward. And here I ſhall take leave to recover from Oblivion, a Paſſage that I do not know, is preſerved by any publick Print. I have heard of one, who being Servant in a Family of good Order, did, while there, ſubmit to *Family-Catechiſing*, and thereby obtained a form, tho' only a form of Knowledge. After his removal thence, he fell into ill Company, and Courſes, and at laſt committed ſome Fact, puniſhable with Death: Being apprehended, and committed to Priſon, the *Poor Creature* at once ſaw Death and Hell before him, and began to bethink himſelf how, tho' he muſt loſe his Life, he might ſave his Soul. His time was ſhort, he was ſhut off from all Advantages abroad, and ſhut up with Company, more like to harden, than ſoften his Heart. In the Multitude of his hurrying Thoughts within him, he begun at laſt to reflect upon that *good Family*, he once lived in, and he ſeriouſly recollected the good Things he then obtained ſome

'Notion

'Notion of, and it pleased God, that his 'Knowledge issued in Conversion. And when-'he came to dye by the Hand of Justice, 'this was part of the good Advice he gave 'to those who were Spectators, "That "they would get Knowledge, tho' they "did no more, for that the Truths, sto-"red up in their Heads, might afterwards "fall down on their Hearts. This, he said, "was his case, or else he could not with "such comfort, go thus out of the World.

'Let me in the close importunately 'beseech Magistrates, Ministers, the Ma-'sters, and Mistresses of Schools, all 'Heads and Members of Families, effectu-'ally to set upon promoting this, and other 'parts of *Reformation*, as they would escape 'those most fearful Judgments, which 'will else, as certainly befall one, and all 'of them, as there is a Righteous God in 'Heaven, and wicked Sinners on Earth. 'God will *pour forth his fury upon the hea-'then that know him not, and on all the fa-'milies that call not on his Name*, Jer. 10. '25. It is said, *of a people of no under-'standing, that he that made them, will 'have no mercy on them; and he that formed 'them, will shew them no favour*, Isa. 27. '11. And let not the lucid interval of 'our present seeming deliverance, flatter 'any. *The Prosperity of fools destroys them.* 'The Sun shone on *Sodom* in the Morning, 'and yet God rained Hell out of Heaven

'upon it, e're Noon. God will not deli-
'ver us to do all our Abominations. *Ex-*
'*cept we repent, we ſhall periſh.* It muſt
'be Repentance and *Reformation*, or Ru-
'ine and Deſtruction. In vain we flatter
'our ſelves with Peace, if God be our E-
'nemy, and proclaim War againſt us.
'*There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked*,
'Iſa. 57.21. But if we timely Repent and
'Reform, *It may be we may be hid in* (or
'*from*) *the day of the Lord's anger*, Zeph.
'2. 3. Saith the Lord, *Wiſdom and know-*
'*ledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times, and*
'*ſtrength of Salvation*, Iſa. 33. 6. And, *The*
'*Lord will create upon every dwelling place*
'*of Mount Zion, and upon her Aſſemblies,*
'*a cloud and ſmoak by day, and the ſhining*
'*of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the*
'*glory ſhall be a defence.* As one great Step
'toward Reformation and Safety, *God*
'*himſelf turn the hearts of the fathers to*
'*the children, and the hearts of the children*
'*to the fathers, leſt he come, and ſmite the*
'*earth with a curſe*, Mal. 4. 6.

'Now may theſe Words be *as Goads* and *as Nails*: *Goads* to put us on to this 'duty; *Nails* to *fix* and *faſten* us there-'in, Eccleſ. 12. 11.

'If any, when they have read this, 'with the following Tract, ſhall think 'meanly of it, or carp at the Author, as one 'that hath taken upon him a mean Em-'ployment, thus to Write and Print a

'Book,

'Book, chiefly to induce and direct Fami-
'lies, to make uſe of Books written by
'other Men; I only Anſwer, That ſo
'many able Pens have been already
'ſo variouſly employed in writing Ex-
'plications on thoſe Excellent Cate-
'chiſms of the Aſſembly, that theſe would
'give a *Superſedeas* to my Writing, were
'I ever ſo well qualified for it. I may,
'in this caſe, allude to that, *For what can*
'*the man do, that cometh after the king? even*
'*that which hath been already done.* Eccleſ. 2.
'12. Or as it is in the Marginal reading, *In*
'*thoſe things which have been already done.*
'But, beſide, ſome are fitter to ſerve un-
'der others, than be Maſter Work-men.
'It may be enough for me, if I can follow
'the Reapers, and bind up what more a-
'ble Labourers have laid ready to my
'Hand. I have what I aim at, if I can,
'by the Addition of this one little Wheel,
'give Motion to thoſe greater Ones, that
'have been wrought by abler Hands.

'The God of Heaven himſelf bleſs this
'to every Family, and Perſon, to whom
'it ſhall come.

'*Conſider what I have ſaid, and the*
'*Lord give you Underſtanding in all Things.*
'Amen.

AN

AN EARNEST CALL TO Family-Catechiſing, AND REFORMATION, &c.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction. The general Method propoſed.

AMong the many deadly Symptoms of the Decays of Religion, and near Approach of Judgments, one of the greateſt is the ſo viſible Declenſions of Piety, and Increaſes of Sin and Vanity not only in the open World, but in thoſe that would be counted Chriſtian Families It is a great Mercy to be built

built up in Families, and no ſmall Honour to be the Head of one of thoſe little Common-wealths; but withall, the preſent Truſt, and future Account is great. Every Perſon in the Family, is a Soul committed to the Care of ſuch as do, or ſhould govern. The Church, in her Firſt Infancy, for above Two thouſand Years, was nurſed in the Families of the Patriarchs, and then God's whole Worſhip was uſually there celebrated: and tho afterward, God inlarged the Borders of his Church, and then appointed ſome Solemn parts of his Worſhip, to be more publickly Adminiſtred; yet it is manifeſt unto Reaſon, back'd with undeniable Inſtances, That God never deſigned his People ſhould turn all Religion out of their Doors. In general, they are in their Families, to offer up the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe, to read the Holy Scriptures, ſing Pſalms, and inſtruct their Houſholds in the Things of God, and walk before them in his Fear: And more particularly, they are to deal with reſpective Perſons, under their Charge, by way of Examination, Inſtruction, Encouragement, Reproof, Correction, as the Matter requires; and if, after all, they remain Sons of

Eph. 6. 18.
2 *Sam.* 6. 20.
Iſaiah 59. 21.
Joh. 5. 39.
Pſalm 118. 15.
Pſalm 30. *Title.*
Pſalm 101.

of *Belial*, will not be reformed themſelves, but endanger the corrupting of others; having duly ſought God for them, and with all long-ſuffering, waited to ſee, if God peradventure will give them Repentance, they are at laſt to exclude them the Family, whether they be Children, or Servants, which is a little Excommunication: tho' upon their Repentance, and Reformation, they may be received again. But how ſad is it, that in moſt of the Families that call themſelves Chriſtian, there is little, yea nothing of this Holy Order; but, on the contrary, precious time ſpent on Cards and Dice; their Diſcourſes, not only vain and frothy, but ſtuff'd with fulſome and abominable Oaths, and Execrations; a height of Vanity in their Attire, immoderate Expence in Furniture, monſtrous Exceſs in Eating and Drinking, with a full purſuit of Eaſe and Pleaſure, or Worldly Profit; and all this cloakt over, at the moſt, with an empty Form of Godlineſs, as vain as the reſt: And if there be any one in the Family of a more ſerious Spirit and Deportment, and that cannot run with the reſt to the ſame Exceſs of Riot, he or ſhe is but the May-game of the other: As if, to be truly Religious were the only Vice, to be Vitious the only Vertue; as if it were meritorious to be Vile, and the only way to eſcape Cenſure, were to deſerve it. What a hap-

py Thing it were, if one could do any Thing toward the putting ſome ſtop to that mighty Torrent of Sin, and Wrath, that at once threaten us, now Deep calleth unto Deep, by an effectual promoting of Family-Reformation!

But tho' I wiſh Families univerſally regulated, yet there is one ſpecial Duty I ſhall more particularly inſiſt upon, namely, Family-Catechiſing, which is ſuch a Duty, as being well managed, would influence us to many other.

I ſhall briefly open the Nature of Catechiſing, and prove it to be a duty; direct Parents, and Governours of Families, as to the Performance of it; offer ſome Motives, for their ſo doing; give ſome Advice to the governed Part of Families; lay down ſome Inducements to them, to ſubmit to thoſe Directions; and in the Cloſe, Anſwer thoſe Objections, that either the governing, or governed Part of Families, may make againſt what I am propoſing. Of each in a diſtinct Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

What Catechising is. Publick Catechising by the Minister, and private Catechising by the Heads and Governours of Families, proved a Duty by Scripture. A Catechism ought to contain a Form of sound Words. The Catechisms of the late Assembly recommended.

CAtechising in general, is any Instruction by Word of Mouth; more particularly it is a plain and familiar instructing of Persons in the Rudiments of any Doctrine: but yet most strictly of all it is taken for teaching the Principles of Christian Religion; and we have both the Word and Thing it self in Scripture. This Catechising is either publick, and as such performed by a Minister of the Gospel. Saith the Apostle, *let him that is Taught or Catechised, in the Word, communicate unto him that Teacheth or Catechiseth in all good things*, Gal. 6. 6. where we read both of the *Catechist* or him that Catechiseth, and the *Catechumen*, or the Person Catechised. In another

Κατηχέω à κατὰ & ἠχέω, sono, est vivâ voce instituere. *To instruct by Word of Mouth.*

Ὁ κατηχούμενος τῷ κατηχοῦντι.

nother place the same Apostle mentions *Instructors of Children*, as the Greek Word in its strictness signifies. And there were in the Primitive Churches Catechists, that is, Teachers, whose particular Work it was to Catechise, and they had their Catechumens, those that were instructed by them; and it might be to very good purpose, if we had such now.

1 Cor. 4. 15. παιδαγωγὸς.

But to descend from Publick to Private, or Family-Catechising, and Instruction, which we have both Scripture-Precept and Precedent for. We have, among other, these Scripture-Precepts and Commands for it: *These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy House*, &c. Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. So in another place, *But teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons*, &c. Deut. 4. 9, 10. Saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 78. 5, 6, 7. He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their Children*, &c. Saith *Solomon, train up*, or Catechise, *a Child in the way he should go*, &c. Add to the rest that of the Apostle, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath, but bring them up in the Nurture & Admonition of the Lord*. Eph. 6. 4 I will

Prov. 22. 6. *in the Margin.*

now

now pass from Scripture-Precepts to Scripture-Precedents and Examples, whereby this Duty of Family-Catechising is further confirmed. *Solomon* writ his book of Proverbs, *To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion*, Prov. 1. 1, 4. And he calls upon his own Son, thus, *My Son, hear the instructions of a father, and forsake not the law of thy Mother*, ver. 8. He saith afterwards, *A wise son heareth his father's instruction*, Prov. 13. 1. *&c.* Which implieth, that a wise Father will give instruction to his Son. He concludes that book of wise Sayings with *the words of King* Lemuel, *the prophecy that his mother taught him*, Prov. 31. 1. *&c.* Which contains indeed most excellent Catechetical Instructions. *Joshua* resolved, *that he and his house would serve the Lord*, Ios. 24. 15. having likewise, no doubt, so instructed them, and intending to continue so doing. Who can doubt but *Timothy* had been thus Catechised by his good *Mother* and *Grand-Mother*, whose *faith* he inherited? But a great and standing Instance, is that of *Abraham* the Father of the Faithfull, and, no doubt, to be imitated by all his Spiritual Children. Now of him God himself testifieth: *I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and* 2 *Tim.* 1. 5.

Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath ſpoken of him, Gen. 18. 19. Thus you ſee we have both Scripture-Precepts and Precedents for the Warrant of this Duty of Family-Catechiſing and Inſtruction: And what is there recorded, is for our admonition.

Inſtruction ought indeed to be given occaſionally, yea, and all occaſions taken for it. But publick and Family-Catechiſing cannot be methodically, and throughly managed, unleſs the chief heads of Chriſtian Doctrine be firſt digeſted in a Form of Sound Words according to the Scriptures. Now beſides many other excellent Catechiſms ready provided to our hands, we have thoſe of that Reverend Aſſembly, which I recommend to you as being a little, but withall great Body of Divinity: and likewiſe becauſe divers holy and good Men have written very worthily thereon, whoſe books may aſſiſt your proceeding herein with more eaſe and profit both to your ſelves and Families.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Directing Parents and Governours of Families, for the Catechising of their Families.

I Now proceed to direct such as are Parents of Children, and Governours of Families, as to a method of procedure. Wherein I include those of the Female Sex, who have the greatest Advantage of Forming Children in their younger Years; and whose Business engageth them to be more constantly at home. *If Queen* Esther *observe a private fast, her maidens shall fast also*, Esther 4. 16. And no doubt, she engaged them in more ordinary, as well as these extraordinary Duties of Religion. Mothers should be Mothers in *Israel*. How the Royal *Bathsheba* did document her *Solomon*; and honest and religious *Lois* and *Eunice* did instruct their *Timothy* in Scripture-knowledge, I have already instanced. Good *Monica*'s Soul underwent stronger Travail-Pangs for the new Birth of her *Austin*, than her Body did for his first Birth. Can you bear the Thoughts of it, That those whom you have born from the Womb, that have hung on your Breast, and been dand-

Aug. *Confession.*

led on your Knees, should be Fire-brands in Hell to all Eternity; and not rather desire and endeavour they may be Heirs of Eternal Glory?

Now to One and All of you, I say in this Case, as *Jotham* in another to the men of *Shechem*, *Hearken unto me, that God may hearken unto you*, Judg. 9. 7.

1. I desire Parents of Children and Governours of Families to consider with themselves, what a great, necessary, and beneficial Duty, this of Catechising is. Humble your selves in secret before the Lord, for your so great, and long neglects of it. Beg of God, Courage for, and Conduct and Success in it. Resolve, before the Lord, that you will break through all Temptations and Oppositions, and set upon this Duty, and study to do it to the best advantage.

2. Having thus solemnly prepared your selves for this Work: In the next place, prepare your Families: Acquaint them, you are convinced, it is your Duty, to be concerned for the Souls committed to you; and that you look upon Catechising, as a proper Means for their Instruction and confirmation in those great Truths, which they ought to believe, and Duties they ought to practise. Let them know, you expect their Compliance in a Matter wherein God may be so much glorified, and they benefited. Put them upon solemn Preparations

rations for it; and if you have obſerved ſinful Miſcarriages in any, give them particular Admonitions. As *Jacob* ſaid to his houſhold and all that were with him, *Put away the ſtrange gods that are among you, and be ye clean; and let us ariſe and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God*, &c. *Gen.* 35. 2, 3. So do you ſay unto your Family, when you are making your Houſe a *Bethel, a Houſe of God.*

3. See that your Family get the Anſwers of the *Aſſembly's Catechiſm* by memory, ſo as to be able to repeat them perfectly, and diſtinctly, without Book; which when they have done, ſo far as is neceſſary for your beginning, then ſet a-part ſome convenient time, at leaſt once a Week; and, if any extraordinary Occaſion neceſſarily diverts you at that Seaſon, be ſure you take ſome other. And when you actually engage in this Holy Exerciſe, let not the Family be ſcatter'd here and there; nor ſome engage in the Service of the World, or be idly chatting, while others are engag'd in the Service of God: but ſummon the whole Family together, and let them ſolemnly preſent themſelves, as before the Lord.

4. As to the Actual Performance of the Duty it ſelf, I would direct you to a Method ſo eaſie, that thoſe of the meaneſt Capacities may comply with it. And (1.) Begin with Prayer to God for his Aſſiſtance

Assistance and Blessing in this Work; for it is *he must teach to profit*, Isa. 48. 17. and *none teacheth like him*, Job 36. 22. Pray that God would make it a Means of Enlightning your Minds, Confirming and Establishing your Judgments, Convincing your Consciences, Moving your Affections, Engaging your Hearts, of Converting you to God, and Building you up in Faith and Holiness, and so of bringing you to eternal Happiness and Salvation. Having thus prayed to God, (2.) Apply your selves to your Family, asking them some Questions in the *Assembly's Catechism*; to which let them return the Answers without Book, audibly, distinctly, and seriously. Two or Three Answers, I conceive, are as many as you can well insist on at one time. And since learning these, and repeating them only by rote, is of little Signification, I do further advise you, (3.) To ask them By-Questions for the Proving, and Improving their Understandings in those Truths; and for your own, and their Ease, in this Part of the Work, I do recommend to you Mr. *Lye's Explanation of the Assembly's Catechism*, or that written by Mr. *Joseph Allein* The former is more full, Mr. *Lye* writing his last of that nature, after the other; and having also a peculiar Talent for promoting this excellent Work. Toward the close of which Book, there is a most Useful Alphabetical

betical Table, explaining the difficult Words and Terms throughout the *Catechiſm*: But the *Latter* ſome have choſen to uſe, as more familiar. In both theſe, you have Queſtions fitted to your Hand; ſo that you need only to read them diſtinctly and intelligibly, and the Matter is reduc'd to ſuch a Method, (eſpecially in Mr. *Lye*'s) that the Learner may return his Anſwers with a ſingle *Yes*, or *No*. (4.) When you have finiſhed this Part of your Work, I would have you, if time will permit (elſe at ſome other time) read Mr. *Thomas Vincent's Explicatory Catechiſm*, ſo far as concerns the Anſwers you have been upon. (5.) When you have done Catechiſing, ſing the whole, or ſome part of a Pſalm, ſuited, ſo near as you can, to that ſubject you have been upon: And upon Acquaintance with the Pſalms, it will hardly be poſſible for you to inſiſt upon any Two or Three Anſwers, but you may find ſome Pſalm very ſuitable thereto. This being devoutly performed, will yield unſpeakable, both Delight and Profit. Then, (6.) Conclude all with Prayer to God, for a Bleſſing on his own Ordinance. And if the time you pitch upon, be the Evening, you may in that concluding Prayer, commit your Selves and Families to God, for that Night, and remember to join Praiſes with your Prayers. All this, I conceive, may be performed in one

one Hours time, or within it, unleſs reading Mr. *Vincent*'s *Explicatory Catechiſm*, ſhould cauſe you to exceed. To prevent which, you may, as you ſee Occaſion, omit ſome part, or the whole of that, till ſome other Evening of the Week. (7.) You may alſo do well to ſignifie, That if any of them have Doubts and Objections, they ſhould, at convenient times, move them to you, which will put you upon further Study and Conſideration; and ſo in teaching them, you will learn your ſelves. If their Queſtions or Objections puzzle you, ſo that you cannot reſolve them with due Satisfaction, apply your ſelves to your Miniſter, which will put him upon ſtudying the Caſe, and be a Mutual Advantage both to him and you. Yea, he will hereby, in ſome meaſure, know the Spiritual State, both of the Sheep and Lambs of his Flock. (8.) When you have throughly verſed your Selves, and Families in the ſhorter, you may proceed to the *Larger Catechiſm* of the *Aſſembly*. And having firſt gone through the Catechiſms, without the Proofs, you may then put your Family upon learning thoſe, and particularly examine them, what Part of the Anſwer the Proof is brought to confirm, and what Part of the Proof confirms that Part of the Anſwer. This will not a little promote your knowledge of, and confirmation in the Truths of God.

God. I have been more large on this Fourth Particular, because it is directive to the Actual Performance of this Duty. Beside the Books before-mention'd, Mr. *Doelittle's Scheme of the Assembly's Catechism*, Printed in a single Sheet, is worth every Families having. (5.) Labour to be well grounded your selves, and confirm those under your Charge, in the great Articles of Christian Faith; as the Being of God, the Oneness of his Essence; the Trinity of Persons, or Subsistences; the Lord Jesus Christ, his Person, his Natures, Divine and Humane; his Offices, Kingly, Priestly, Prophetick; his Sufferings, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, sitting at God's Right Hand; his future Judging the World, with all other his Glorious Performances; the absolute Necessity of Faith in him, and intire reliance on his Merits, as the only Matter of our Righteousness, for Justification; that true Justifying Faith works by Love, and without Works, Faith is Dead. The total Impotence of corrupt Nature, as to all Spiritual Operations, and the Absolute Necessity of the Energy of the Spirit of God; yet that it is our Duty to be conversant with the Means; That the Holy Scriptures are a sufficient Rule for Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Conversation. Let these, and the like Principles, be engraven on your Hearts, that you may be nourished

up in the words of faith and of good Doctrine, whereunto you have attained, 1 Tim. 4. 6.

6. Take great care, that God's Sabbaths be strictly observed, and industriously employed by your Selves and Families. As the Misimproving of this day is one great inlet to all prophaneness, so the Spiritual Improvement of it, will much advance all true Piety. The Sabbath should have its Double of Offerings. You will thrive in Spirituals all the Week, according to your Spiritual Industry that day. The Fourth Command is primarily directed to Parents and Governours of Families, who are responsible for themselves, and those under them.

7. See to it, that as you profess your selves a Christian Family, so you maintain Universal Holiness of Conversation. Let no duty be omitted, or Sin committed with thy connivance. Look strictly to it, that all relative Duty be duely discharged; in which much of your Religion consists, and on which the Credit of Religion and our own Comfort, very much depends. Make a compassionate, but faithfull use of that Authority which God has committed to thee; and withall, see to it, that thou *behave thy self wisely in a perfect way, and walk within thy house with a perfect heart, setting no wicked thing before thee*, Psal. 101. 2, 3. Else thy Endeavours for the Good of others, are like to be both heartless, and fruitless.

8. This

8. This one thing I would add, which I would have by no means forgotten, That you do not confine your ſelves only to thoſe of your own Family, but invite, and encourage any other Families (that have not, or cannot have thoſe Advantages) to come in among you, which will be a great piece of Soul-charity. This I now mention, is not invading the Miniſters Office or Work, any more than it is to admit the Members of ſome poor, prayerleſs Family to partake of your Family-Devotions. Yea, this being well regulated may be made greatly ſubſervient to more publick Catechiſing performed by the Miniſter, and I have experimentally found it ſo.

9. Let me ſuperadd this. If at any time you ſlip into Neglects of, or Remiſneſs in your Family-Duties (and our deceitfull Hearts, a ſubtle Devil, & an inſnaring world will be apt to give us too many Avocations) ſee that you carefully re-aſſume your Duty again, and endeavour to recover your Zeal and Warmth therein. And in caſe there be any extraordinary cauſe, either from Omiſſions of Duty, or Commiſſions of Sin, ſolemnly humble your ſelves *as a family with faſting and prayer*, Zech. 12. 12, 13, 14. To implore God's Pardon and Favour; and let this be followed with as ſolemn Reformation.

Thus I have, according to the measure of my Ability, given you Directions for the profitable managing this great Duty of *Family-Catechising*, and Reformation. Now the Lord himself direct you, both to, and in the Performance hereof.

CHAP. IV.

Some Motives offered to Family-Governours, in behalf of Family-Catechising.

IF it can be needfull, to add Motives for the further inforcing that Advice I have given, I would offer such as these; which I shall, for brevity sake, deliver more promiscuously, and not stand to draw out under particular Heads. *Catechising* is a Duty, yea an advantagious Duty; and, being well managed, may meet with those, who reap little or no benefit by Sermons, or continued Discourses: For this is more suited to the Capacities of youth; it doth more necessitate their Attention, and put them upon the Exercise both of Memory, and Judgment. It is a proper Means of begetting, and increasing Knowledge, and that not only in regard of its familiar Condescension; but also, as in a little compass, it takes in the whole Body, and System of Divinity:

Divinity: and Divine knowledge is of all most excellent. It further tends to settle and confirm the Judgment in the great Truths to be believed, and Duties to be practised. Many let go Truth, because they never had fast hold of it. *Catechising* is a great means of Prevention of Apostasy; and had we retained more of the former, we had seen less of the latter. It may also be a happy means of preventing many, yea and great Sins, or speedy convincing the Conscience where Sin hath prevailed. How many from mere Ignorance of the Extent of God's Commands, have not only fallen into great Sins, but continued in them without repentance, to whom good Instruction might have been a Means of Prevention, or Recovery. This may be a Means of working and promoting Faith, and Holiness of Heart, and Conversation; yea all Good here and hereafter. By Catechising those under your charge, you may mend your own Head and Heart. *Family-Catechising* will be mainly subservient to that great Duty of *Publick Catechising*: And who knows, but that between the one and the other, the Enemy, Sin, may be be-set before and behind, and fall in battel. These two may be like the former and latter rain promoting all Spirituall fruitfulness. Sure, if as children are solemnly dedicated to God in Baptism; so parents did conscienciously endeavour to

bring them up for God, and care were further taken by publick Catechiſing and Inſtructions to fit them for, and tranſmit them to a compleat ſtate of Church-Communion: Churches would (by the bleſſing of God) be more plentifully ſtockt from Chriſtian Families, beſide the children of the Stranger that might be joined to the Lord.

By working on the Young Ones of the preſent Age, an Earneſt may be laid for the good of ſucceeding Generations: Yea a Seed of your own may be raiſed up to praiſe the Lord, and bear up his Name in the World. Thus may your own *Gardens flouriſh*, the *tender grapes appear, and your Pomgranats bud forth*, Song 7. 12. *Your Sons* (thus manured) *may be as plants growing up in their youth, and your daughters (thus ſquared) may be as corner-ſtones poliſhed after the Similitude of a palace*, Pſal. 144. 12. And you may, at the laſt day, give up your account with joy; and ſay, *Here am I, Lord, and the children that thou haſt given me*, and then ſhall you and they be for *ever together with the Lord*: be *pillars* in the heavenly Temple, and never be removed thence. Thus have I finiſhed what I intend for the Governing part of Families: I ſhall now addreſs my ſelf to the Governed.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Advice to the Governed part of Families.

THE former part more-eſpecially relates unto Parents of Children, and Governours of Families. It may, I conceive, be needful to ſubjoyn ſome particular Advice to Children and Servants; or any other, who may be the governed part of Families. For if Means of Reformation be uſed by Family-Governours, yet if it have not a due influence upon the Family under their Charge, it doth not reach its End, but is like Water ſpilt upon the Ground. And I am the rather induced to apply my ſelf particularly unto you, becauſe the Governed is uſually the moſt numerous part of the Family: And tho' you are at preſent, in regard of ſome external Circumſtances, the inferiour part of it; yet you have as precious Souls as your Parents and Governours. God is equally concerned for you, and has commanded Miniſters to feed his *Lambs*, as well as *Sheep*, Joh. 21. 15, 16, 17. And we do profeſs our Selves the Servants of all; yea, and your ſelves have as much reaſon to be concerned for your own Souls, as your Parents and Governours have for theirs.

In this sence, our Salvation is *common Salvation*, Jude, *v.* 3. and there is no distinction of *bond* or *free*, Gal. 3. 28. Yea, if God lengthen out your Days, (and Obedience is the way to long Life,) you that are now Children and Servants, may become Parents of Children, and have Servants under you, being built up in Families of your own. Now the better you are at present in your private Station, the better you may be when advanced to a more publick Capacity: For to Obey well, is the way to Govern well. So that setting of you right for the present, may be a Means of regulating your Families for the future; and those who shall receive holy Instructions from you, may afterward convey the same to their Families: And who knows, but as there shall ever be a holy Seed, raised up to praise and serve the Lord; so there may be a Succession of Religion in those that descend from you, till the coming of Christ to Judgment. It is observable, That though God calls home to himself some who were far off; and he will yet more eminently do so, *when all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him*, Psal. 22. 27. Yet, Religion hath been much propagated through the Loins of the Faithful. And it hath been observed, That when Grace gets into a Family, ordinarily it doth not soon take

its

its leave of it: But though there may be ſome ſad Interruptions, yet it appears many times again in Grand-Children, or Great-Grand-Children; and if not in the direct Line, yet Collaterally; as the Rivers of Water run thorough the Valleys, though not in a direct Courſe, but with many Windings and Turnings, and various Branchings; ſo that we are many times ready to be at a loſs in following them. Of this the Scripture doth, and our own Obſervation may, furniſh us with Inſtances.

Now may I not begin my Addreſs to you, as St. *Auſtin* one of his Sermons, "O, Young Ones, my "Speech is to you who "are in the flower of "your Age, but peril "and danger of Mind. *Ad vos, Juvenes, mihi ſermo; flos ætatis periculum mentis.* Aug. de Temp

Or with very little Variation, as St. *John*, that boſome Diſciple of our Lord, *I have written unto you, fathers, that you may know him that is from the beginning. I now write unto you, little children, that you may know the father. I write unto you, young men, that you may be ſtrong, and overcome the wicked one, and that the word of God may abide in you*, 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13, 14. Therefore, *Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord*, Pſal. 34. 11. I ſhall give you the ſum of my Advice, in the following Particulars. 1. Con-

(1.) Conſider ſeriouſly, what kind of Creatures God hath made you, and learn to ſet a due value upon your own beings. The very Frame of thy Body, which is *wonderfully and fearfully made, and curiouſly wrought*, Pſal. 139. 14, 15. ſpeaks ſomething extraordinary. But then thy Soul is Heaven-born, a Spiritual and Immortal Being, capable of the Knowledge and Enjoyment of God himſelf; and by what Bonds and Tyes this Material Body and Immaterial Soul are united and linked together, thou do'ſt not know. So that thine own Being is above thy Conception. St. *Auſtin* "wonders that Men "admire other things, and leave themſelves unadmired." Conſider, thou art not a lifeleſs Rock or Stone, a ſenſeleſs Plant or Tree, an irrational brute Beaſt; but a Creature endowed with a rational and immortal Soul, capable of knowing and enjoying God here and hereafter: Yea, thy mortal Body ſhall, at the laſt day, be raiſed to an Immortal State. Remember, thou art a Creature made for Eternity.

Aug. Confeſ.

(2.) Seriouſly lay to heart your State of Sin and Miſery: How you are tainted with *Adam*'s firſt Tranſgreſſion. The Scriptures of Truth acquaint us, That *in him all ſinned, and therefore death came upon all men*, Rom. 5. 12. And *in Adam all died*,

died. 1 Cor. 15. 22. Consider further how your whole Nature, Soul and Body, every Faculty of the one, and Member of the other is vitiated, and defiled with the Leprosie of Sin. Thou hast within, and upon thee a compleat Body of Sin and Death, *Rom.* 7 24. with all its Members.

Even the youngest Children have old *Adam* in them. Infants themselves are not innocent. Thou hast that Corruption within thee, which is sufficient to betray thee to the greatest Sins, and expose thee to the greatest Sufferings. Yea, thou art guilty of manifold actual Sins of Omission, and Commission, and these cloathed with various Aggravations. O! Consider how thy excellent Being is debased by Sin, and how thou hast plunged thy self into unspeakable, yea unconceivable Misery.

(3) See that thou be regenerate and born again, without which, thou shalt never enter into the Kingdom of God. Thou art by Nature *a child of Wrath*, and Heir of Hell. Thy Nature must be changed by renewing Grace, before thou canst be a Child of God, and Heir of Heaven. *Joh.* 3. 3. 5. And this know, and remember, that the New Birth is of the whole Man, as the Natural is, if it be a living Birth. Remember your solemn Dedication to God in Baptism obligeth you to secure your

your Regeneration, improve it therefore accordingly. If taken out of the World by Death, before thou art taken out of the World by Grace, it had been good for thee thou hadſt never been born; for thou art undone to Eternity. Woe to thee, if thou dieſt before thou art alive to God: for on ſuch the ſecond Death ſhall have Dominion, and they ſhall be kill'd with Death.

(4.) Have, and maintain an inward Value and Eſteem of your Parents, Maſters, and Governours: Yea, tho' they be not ſo great, or rich, or wiſe, or obliging, as ſome others. Eſteem them as thoſe ſet over you in the Lord, and as obeying the Lord in ſo doing. "I have heard of a Wife "who ſaid ſhe could be Obedient to her "Husband, but he was ſuch a one as did "not deſerve it. It was reply'd, "But "the Command of God is worthy to be "obey'd, and ſhew your Obedience unto "that." So in this Caſe, The Yoke will gall if it be not lined with Love: but Love will cover a multitude of Faults. Beſide the Sin of Undutifulneſs, we profit little by thoſe whom we do not much affect.

1 Theſ 4. 11. τὰ ἴδια.

(5.) Study the Duties of your particular Places, and Relations, and conſcientiouſly practiſe them. Many ſtudy other Duties, and neglect *their own. They ſpy a Mote in anothers eye, and cannot ſee a beam in their own.* Do you

you especially study and perform your own Duties. Let your words, looks, gestures, actions, be such towards Parents and Superiours as they ought to be. Let their Cautions restrain you from all Vanities, their Counsels set you upon the Practice of what is Duty. Yea, tho Parents and Masters do not perform their Duty to thee, yet thou must perform thine both to God, and them. *You must be subject with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*, 1 Pet. 2. 18. their Sin can be no Dispensation or Absolution to thee.

6. In every Employment aim principally at the Glory of God. If thou learnest, learn for God: if thou workest, work for God. In the choice of a Calling, be for that in which thou mayest most Glorifie God. Yea, let thy very Recreations be such and so timed, as may subserve this great end. If thou unbendest the Bow, and oylest the Wheels, let it be, to fit for Service.

7. Let thy whole self be found in all those religious Duties which God requires. You are to read, meditate, and pray in Secret. Saith our Saviour, *Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret*, Mat. 6. 6. Now remember to bow thy Heart, as well as Knees. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto*

me, saith the Lord? Jer. 30. 21. Offer not the Sacrifice of fools without an Heart. God will not accept of an heartless Sacrifice, *He is a Spirit, and will be worshiped in Spirit, as well as in truth*, Joh. 4. 24. And for Family-Worship, while the Word of God is reading, or Prayer made, let not thine Ear be listning, or Eye wandring after other things, nor thy Heart be with the fools in the farthest parts of the Earth. Let not the Lord be nigh in thy Mouth, and far from thy Reins, but set and keep thy heart to the duty. When Psalms are singing, make not thy self a Mute, since God hath not made thee so. Let not a dumb Devil possess thee, but tune thy Heart and thy Voice unto God's praises. So when present at God's Publick Worship, let not thy better part be absent.

8. Submit willingly and conscienciously to Family-Catechising and Instruction. When Parents and Governours of Families have overcome their own inward Discouragments, let them not meet with new Conflicts and Discouragements from thee. Be ready to learn, submit to Examination, study the Sence and Meaning of what you learn, ask questions, for your farther Instruction, of these Elders, or more expert than your selves: Enquire of your Parents or Governours, or Ministers, or any other able to instruct you. It is observed, That those

those who are much in moving pertinent Questions, make the best Scholars.

9. Carefully avoid all Sin, and especially watch against those Sins that you may be most in danger of. Saith the Apostle, *Flee youthful lusts*, 2 Tim. 2. 22. Among these let me caution you, 1. Against Lying. Dare not to use it, either to cover a Fault, or gain a seeming Advantage. The Lyer is not true to himself: his Heart and his Tongue are distorted one from the other. He deceives his Neighbour, directly oppoſeth the glorious Attribute of God's Truth, makes a deep Wound upon his own Conscience, and, without repentance, will meet with his Reward in Hell. 2. Dread Swearing, Cursing, taking the Name of God in vain, and all evil speaking: Remember your Tongues are not your own, but God is Lord over you and them. Let that Scripture be engraven on your Heart, *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of Judgment: for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*, Mat. 12. 36, 37. 3. Avoid all Pride in Heart, Life and Attire. Be cloathed with Humility. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. 4. Shun idleness How canst thou have nothing to do, who hast a God to serve, and a Soul to save? When idle, thou temptest the ve-

ny Tempter; and if thou findeſt nothing to do, he will find Employment for thee. 5. Keep thy ſelf free from Injuſtice and Defrauding. It is a great ſin; will make a great clamor, when Conſcience is awakened; and to make reſtitution, tho' a neceſſary, is a very hard Duty; and therefore avoid the occaſion. *The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. Let no ſin of this nature ſeem little to thee. St. *Auſtin* was brought to Confeſſion, for robbing his neighbour's Pear-Tree; Which ſin he greatly aggravates, as alſo his Couſenage in youthful Sports and Recreations. Take heed thou indulgeſt not thy ſelf in thoſe Tricks of Youth, which will afterward prove Sins of Youth, either here in the Day of Conſcience; or hereafter, at the Barr of God. 6. Take heed of the Sin of wantonneſs, even to a laſcivious Look; yea, Thought; and be not by Speech, Garb, or Geſture, an Occaſion of Temptation to any. We muſt not only avoid the Snare our ſelves, but be carefull we do not ſpread Nets for others. 7. Be carefull thou doſt not drown thy ſoul in a Life of Pleaſure, Voluptuouſneſs and Exceſs. Be not of thoſe who are *Lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God.* 2 Tim. 3. 4. 8. Take heed of Worldlineſs. It is a ſin prodigious in Youth, increaſeth with Age, and will

Aug. Conf ſſion.

will at last *drown the Soul in perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. 10. 9. Beware of a Spirit of Obstinacy, and Incorrigibleness. This remember; If thy Spirit get above the reach of Parents, and Superiours; yet thou art not out of God's reach, who will take the work into his own hand, and will certainly meet with thee to thy greater trouble here, or eternal sorrow hereafter. In many places of the World, at this very day, God is fatning the ground with the Blood and Carcasses of children of Disobedience. The Lord has said, That *the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with Iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burnt with Fire in the same place*, 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7. 10. As you would avoid all other Sins, avoid evil Company. *He that walketh with the wise, shall be more wise; but a companion of fools, shall be destroyed*, Prov. 13. 20.

10. Finally from an inward Principle of Religious Fear of God, practise universally, as becometh such an one as is a Christian indeed. Let Religion run thro' your whole Conversation. Be that in your Bed, in your Closet, in the Family, in the World; that your Holy Profession obligeth you to be. *Whatsever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, Col. 3, 17. Walk always, as under the

Eye of God, and with serious Thoughtfulness of Death, Judgment, and Eternity.

Thus I have finished my Advice to you who are the Governed Part of Families.

CHAP. VI.

Some Motives to the Governed Part of Families, to submit to the Directions prescribed.

I Will subjoin a few Motives to induce the governed Part of Families to receive, and practise the Instructions I have given you, and particularly as to submitting to Family-Catechising and Instruction.

(1.) Consider how ignorant and destitute you are by Nature of all true spiritual Good; how prone and inclined unto all Evil: *Vain man would be wise, but he is born like the wild Asse's Colt.* Job xi. 12. Now the Asse is a dull blockish Creature, the wild Asse an untractable Creature; and such is Man by Nature.

(2.) Consider it will be your great Honour and true Comfort, to hearken to good Counsel and receive good Instructions, and that betimes: saith the Lord, *Since thou hast been precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable,* Isa. 43. 4. This made

made *Jabez more honourable than his brethren*, 1 *Chron.* 4. 9, 10. *Wiſdoms ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. All that ever walked in them, have found them ſo. They are Enemies and Strangers to them that ſuggeſt the contrary.

(3.) Conſider how much Evil both of Sin and Puniſhment, thou mayeſt prevent, by a ſpeedy attending to wholſome Counſel and Inſtruction. Look upon thy whole Life, as a time of Temptation; yea, and the further thou engageſt in the World, the more thou ſhalt find the Temptations of it. Even Infancy hath its Temptations, but Childhood more than Infancy; Youth more than Childhood. There are ſuch filthy Luſts of the Fleſh, as make even a Child of God cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* *Rom.* 7. 24. And ſuch would be glad of Deliverance, even by Death. Yea, it is a great Teſtimony of the truth of Grace, when we can deſirouſly ſubmit to Death, which even pure Nature is averſe unto, rather than be infected with Temptations unto thoſe Sins which corrupt Nature is moſt pleaſed with. And it is a further Teſtimony of the Grace of God in us, when yet we ſit patient and ſubmiſſive, though uneaſie, under this greateſt of Burthens, till God ſhall, in his own time and way, give us a fair diſcharge from our ſervice. But if theſe Temptations ſhould prevail, and you

ſhould be induced *to make proviſion for the fleſh, to ſatisfie the luſts thereof*, Rom. 13. 14. what Wounds do you give to your own Souls? Great alſo are our Temptations, when we come to Man's Eſtate; for then ordinarily we engage more deeply in the World, a moſt dangerous Enemy. It was ſmartly, and as truly ſaid by one, "The "*Devil* of *Buſineſs* hurries more Souls to "Hell, than all the Devils in Hell beſides. At this age it is, that Perſons uſually enter on the Conjugal Relation, which ſo much influenceth the reſidue of our Lives; yea, and Poſterity after us: And if you ſhould arrive at Old Age, which few do; yet that, of all, is moſt unteachcable. As to Evil of Puniſhment, it is conſequent to that of Sin: Yea, God ſometimes, even where he forgives the Sin, and exempts from Hell, yet will not remit or abate the rigour of Chaſtiſement here. Saith the Pſalmiſt, *Thou anſwered'ſt them, O God! Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt vengeance upon their inventions*, Pſal. 99. 8. *God may viſit our tranſgreſſions with the rod, and our iniquities with ſtripes, though he do not utterly take his loving-kindneſs away*, Pſal. 89. 32, 33. At leaſt, Sin will coſt us a dear-bought Repentance. Now, how much of this Evil of Sin and Suffering may be happily prevented, by early attending to good Counſel and Inſtruction?

(4) Con-

(4.) Consider the Shortness, and withal Uncertainty of Time; and the vast Extent (if I may so speak) and Concernment of Eternity. Thy Time will soon be at an end, how soon thou knowest not, and thou must take that amazing step into an Eternity which has no end.

(5.) Consider, None ever complained they were brought to Acquaintance with God too early, but many have repented it was so late. Said *Austin*,

" I have loved thee late,
" O thou Truth! so
" Ancient, and yet so
" New." By which, I suppose, he meant, so Ancient in it self, as being Eternal; and yet so New, that is, newly discovered unto him. Who was ever brought so early to God, but he wish'd it were yet earlier, if earlier it could be. I am sure, in this, of the concurrent Testimony of all the Saints that are, or have been, or ever will be upon Earth: though, in this case, *late* is better than *never*; yet *early* is better than *late*.

Sero te amavi, veritas, tam antiqua & tam nova. Aug.

(6.) Consider, As the Lord will be very gracious and indulgent toward you, if you hear Instructions that you may live; so he will be equally severe, if you reject his Counsel, and chuse Death. God was highly pleased with his Sacrifice of Lambs, and his Offerings of First-fruits: When the Ears were yet green, his Soul desires the first ripe

ripe Fruits. When any do early attend the Calls of God, He *remembers the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals*, Jer. 2. 2. *The Shepherd of Israel, even the great Shepherd of the sheep, gathers his lambs in his arms, and lays them in his bosome*, Isa. 40. 11. But *if you cast his fear behind your backs, and walk contrary unto him, he will walk contrary unto you*, Lev. 26. 23, 24. The *Lamb of God* is likewise the *Lion* of the *Tribe of Judah*, and will rend and *tear*, and *none* shall *deliver* out of his Hand, *Psal.* 50. 22. He hath his *Iron Rod*, as well as his *Golden Scepter*; therefore, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way*, Psal. 2. 12.

Thus I have been suggesting Motives, the Lord himself move you by them.

CHAP. VII.

Objections Answered.

The Conclusion.

I Shall now apply my self to Answer those *Objections*, that either the Governors or Governed in Families, or both of them, may be apt to raise against the necessary and important Duty I have been urging. Yet thus much I must first premise in general,

neral, That there can, in this caſe, no Objections be made, but ſuch as ſavour very ſtrongly of Weakneſs, Sloth, Earthlineſs, Impiety and Obſtinacy. But ſuch as they are, I ſhall give them a Hearing, and endeavour to Anſwer them, that this Iniquity may for ever ſtop its mouth.

Object. 1. Some weak Perſons may object againſt Catechiſing, as a *Dead, Flat, Formal Thing, not ſuiting the Spirituality of the Goſpel.*

I Anſwer, (1.) Solemn Catechiſing, or Inſtructing Perſons in the chief Heads of Chriſtian Doctrine, is a Duty of that nature as neceſſarily requires a methodical Collection of thoſe fundamental Truths that lye ſcattered throughout the Scriptures. The Apoſtle mentions a *Form of Doctrine delivered*, Rom. 6. 17. And we are preſented with ſome of the fundamental *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, Heb. 6. 1. under certain Heads, methodically and regularly diſpoſed. And *Timothy* is commanded, to *hold faſt the form of ſound words, which* he had received of *Paul, in faith and love that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. 1. 13.

(2.) Whether, or how far Forms of Prayer are lawful, is nothing to my preſent purpoſe to enquire: But this let me ſay, There is a manifeſt difference between Forms of Prayer, and thoſe impoſed; and Forms for Catechiſing, either compoſed or choſen, as adapted and fitted to that Occaſion

casion which necessarily requires such a Form.

(3.) I plead, as much as you, against Formality in this, or any other Christian Duty: yea, I exhort you to be Spiritual herein. We may be in danger of Formality, without the Use of Forms; and we may, in some cases, make use of Forms, and yet not be formal.

(4.) Many Christians that have experienced high Communion with God, have been very Spiritual in these Exercises, and found their Spirituality promoted thereby.

(5.) The great decay of Spirituality, has been more evident in the Christian World, since the neglect of Catechising, than it was when this Ordinance has been more frequented. For the evincing of this, I desire you to compare the good old Puritan days with ours.

Object. 2. May some say, *We scruple at this way of teaching, by* Question *and* Answer: *Where have we any Precept or Precedent for this, in the Word of God?*

I Answer, (1.) God, in his Word, commanding the Catechising and Instruction of Youth, we must perform it in that method that may best conduce to the attaining the End.

(2.) The Mehod of *Question* and *Answer* is a natural way of familiar, instructive Discourse; and the very Light of Nature has directed the Heathen themselves to the Use of it as *Plato*, and Others. (3.) We

(3.) We have plentiful Scripture-Instances of God's discoursing with Men, and Men one with another by way of *Question* and *Answer*, in order to Information and Instruction. The book of *Job* furnisheth us with abundant examples, beside many other in the *New*, as well as *Old Testament*: even our Lord Christ taught both Privately and Publickly, by way of *Question* and *Answer*.

(4.) Though I recommend this as a most proper, yet I do not assert it the only Method for Familiar-Instruction, and my Reader has his liberty to use any other which he finds really conducing to this great End, as well as this.

Object. 3. Some Parent or Governour of a Family may object, *You put us upon a Task extreme difficult, and next to impossible: We are not Ministers, nor can we Catechise.*

I answer, (1.) I have proved it to be your Duty; and therefore you must not plead Difficulty. You are not to stand and dispute, but go and obey.

(2.) Being Duty, if it were a thousand times more difficult than it is, God can, and, if the fault be not thy own, he will inable thee to perform it so, as shall be acceptable to him, and profitable to thy self and others. Therefore Pray the more, but Practise never the less.

(3.) According to the Method I have proposed, the thing is not only possible,

but may very eaſily be done. I adviſe you to begin and end with Prayer: and I hope you are come ſo far already, as to pray in your Families; Elſe you and they are under that fearfull imprecatione, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name*, Jer. 10. 25. For the Queſtions and Anſwers, you have them in the *Aſſembly's Catechiſm*; Mr. *Allein's*, or Mr. *Lye's* Book is ſufficient for the further Queſticnary part; and Mr. *Vincent's*, for the further Expoſition. One that can but read, may do all this. And then canſt thou not read a Pſalm, fitted to be Sung, and ſome one in the Family ſet a tune to it? Set but thy heart toward the Work, and it will be eaſily done: be Spirituall in it, and it will be well done. But alas many Families plead themſelves off from the Duty of Singing Pſalms, becauſe there is not one among them can ſet a Pſalm-Tune, and but few that can follow it. To this I will only ſay, Can you not hear your neighbours children or ſervants ſing Ballads? Yea, do not ſome in your own Families (I ſpeak it to your ſhame) Sing vain and idle Songs? why cannot you as well learn Pſalm-Tunes, and Sing the Songs of *Zion?* Sure either you can ſing, or may learn. You have accompliſht as difficult Tasks in other kinds. Charge this on your ſelves as a Duty, and ſee what may be done.

Look

Look upon this as the higheſt Uſe and Employment your Tongues are given you for.

Object. 4. Some may object, *Alas, we would be willing, yea, glad to be Catechiſed, but we are ſure the Heads of the Family that we are in will never be brought to perform this Duty, and ſo we are excus'd.*

I anſwer, (1.) The Governours of your Family ought to do it. Our Lord Chriſt has left no particular exception for them, and they muſt anſwer it to him if they do not perform it.

(2.) Judge not uncharitably, before you have made trial. Dare you bear Falſe-witneſs againſt, yea and judge your Superiour without hearing? Uſe all Endeavours to perſwade him. Let the Wife of his Boſome, the Children of his Body, beg at him to take pity on his own, and their Souls. Let Friends, Sojourners and Servants, in all becoming ways, try to move him. One of our Lords Diſciples *came to him to teach them to pray as John taught his diſciples, and our Lord immediately taught them.* Luke 11. 1. So if you, with humility, ſay, Sir, other Maſters inſtruct their Families, we beg you would likewiſe inſtruct us: it may be hoped he will do it. Nay may it not be ſaid, as was to *Moſes* concerning *Aaron*, *Behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he ſeeth thee, he will be glad in his heart*, Exod. 4. 14.

(3) If the Master of the Family will by no means be prevailed with, (which I am hardly willing to suppose,) yet obtain, at least, that another may do it for him. As the Wife, who is to be a help meet for him; or some Servant, or some one of the elder Children, *The Jabez of the family that is more honourable than his brethren*, 1 Chron. 4. 9, 10. Or call in the help of some charitable neighbour.

(4) If you can by no means enjoy this beneficial Ordinance in your own Family, put in and joyn with some other. Beg this Bread abroad, rather than Starve at home.

Object. 5. Some may object, *We are a busy hurrying Family, and cannot spare time for it.*

I answer, (1.) Your time is God's, and you ought not to rob him of his due.

(2.) This great business, according to the Method I have proposed, will take up very little time: it may be one hour in a week, which is but one hour of One Hundred Sixty Eight.

(3.) This will be no Loss, but Gain of Time. God's Blessing will more than make it up. This Whet will be no Lett.

(4.) For Shame, count not that Loss of Time, which may be Gain for Eternity. Did ever any on a Death-bed, and when entring on Eternity, call that lost Time which they spent in the Service of God and their Souls? Many then have called that time

time they have ſpent on the World ſo.

(5.) Is not as much time actually miſſpent by the Maſter of the Family at the Coffee-Houſe, and otherwiſe, and by the Family at home, as ought and might be employed in performing this, and other Family-Duties; Yea, of all the moſt ſeaſonable time for theſe things, the Evening. Do you thus ſquander time away, and yet object the want of it?

Object. 6. Some Governour (or that ſhould be Governour) of a Family, may ſay, *Do you put me upon Catechiſing? Alas, my Family will never bear it, nor endure me, if I ſhould attempt it. My Children are children of Belial. My Servants as ungovernable and untractable, as the boiſtrous* Leviathan, *of whom it is ſaid, in* Job 41. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, &c. *Canſt thou draw out* Leviathan *with an hook, or his tongue with a cord, which thou letteſt down? canſt thou put an hook into his noſe, or bore his jaw through with a thorn? will he make many ſupplications unto thee? will he ſpeak ſoft words unto thee? will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a Servant for ever? None is ſo fierce that dare ſtir him up.*

I Anſwer, (1.) If this be truly the State of any Family; Good God! to what a paſs has the neglect of Family-Government brought us? Let the Perverſeneſs of thy Family cauſe thee to reflect on thine own ſinful Neglects. Thou ſhouldeſt have

buckled sooner to this Business thy self, and have bent these Twigs when greener. Be humbled for thy great Failings and Neglects in this Particular, and be sensible, that the State of thy Family speaks the greater need of what I have been urging.

(2.) Make a prudent and compassionate, but withal effectual use of your Authority; yea, if need be, call in the Minister's help. These obstinate Persons must at least be roundly talked with. And it may be after all, thou may'st find the Event better than thou imagin'st. Yea, this Ordinance will be a means of engaging your Affections one to another. I speak it from some measure of Experience.

(3). Begin with those few you can engage, and it may be others may afterward comply; if from no better Principle, yet for very Shame.

(4.) If any remain obstinate, after all compassionate Endeavours and Forbearance, remove them, and get better in their room. Say, as *David*, *Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God*, Psal. 119. 115. *A froward heart shall depart from me; I will not know a wicked Person. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me*, Psal. 101. 4, 6. Resolve, as good *Joshua*, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Object. 7.

Object. 7. Some, peradventure, may object, *We have not observed Catechising to do any good; and therefore it is as well there be none at all, as to no purpose.*

I Answer, (1.) I have already proved *Catechising* an Ordinance of God, and have mentioned some of the many Benefits of it; and now I caution thee to take heed, that thou art not found guilty of bearing false-witness against so necessary and beneficial an Ordinance. Thou art not to *bear false-witness against thy Neighbour*, Exod. 20. 16. much less against thy GOD.

(2.) If the Abuse of Ordinances by some, yea, the generality, were a good Plea against the lawful Use of them, we might, for the same reason, cast off all the Ordinances of the Gospel, as the *Word*, in the private reading and publick ministry of it; *Prayer*, *Sacraments*, &c. Nay, if we may use nothing that others abuse, we must abandon Meat, Drink, Cloathing; yea, and Life it self: For too many make an ill Use of all these.

(3.) It may be, where thou observest so little fruit, there has been some great fault in the Performance of this Duty. It has not been set upon so solemnly and seriously, so understandingly and judiciously. It may be, it hath not been preceded with Preparation, accompanied with Prayer, nor followed with future Watchfulness. Can we expect God should regard our Duties, when

we our selves do not duly regard them?

(4.) Thou art not, thou canst not be certain, that no good has been done hereby. There may be good, yea, much and great Good done by this Ordinance, tho' it come not under thy Cognizance. Some one or other may have been brought hereby to know God, to bow the Knee in secret to him, and lay hold of his Covenant. These things may be, though thou hast no particular knowledge of them: yea, if this Ordinance has but promoted one good Thought among all those that have been under it, this alone were enough to confute this Objection.

(5.) The Time employed in Catechising, might have been worse spent, and more Sin then, and at other times committed against God. Now it is a great thing to prevent, though it were but one Sin, one Act of Dishonour against the Great God; and it cannot reasonably be thought, but that Catechising hath prevented many.

(6.) *Duty* is *Duty*, and must be done; and whatever effect it has upon others, yet the Performance of it will tend to our Comfort and Profit, both here and hereafter. If we have, with the Disciples, *been fishing long, and caught nothing*, Luke 5. 5, 6. yet at the Command of our Lord, we must continue to *let down the Net*, and may, at last, *have a plentiful draught*. But however, if God commands, we must water, tho' it be a dry Stick, all our days: And

And as he comforted himself, *though Israel be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and our reward shall be with him*, Isa. 46. 4, 5.

(7.) It is certain, much good has been done by Catechising: Many Ministers and People, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, have set their Seal to it: And I wish, That as any receive Benefit by this Ordinance, they would give their Testimony, for the further Confutation of this Objection.

(8.) If any have abused this, (as what Ordinance is there that some have not abused?) their Judgment will be the greater, but the Duty is no whit the less: Yea, let me add, Thy Judgment and Condemnation will be the greater, if after this Admonition, thou either neglectest or trifflest with this Ordinance.

Object. 8. Some, peradventure, may yet object, *Here is more adoe about this Matter, than need: Many have gone to Heaven, who never set up Catechising in their Families, nor were Catechised there.*

I Answer, (1.) If thou only carest to obtain Heaven, but not to obey God, thou art never like to come there. *The Lord Jesus Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9.

(2.) Many that have committed great Sins, as well as omitted great Duties, have at last, tho' with great Difficulty, got to Heaven;

Heaven; but this ſhould no more encourage us to omit the one, than commit the other; and we may pay dear for either.

(3.) The whole Chriſtian World, at this day, groans under the ſad Conſequences of the paſt, and preſent Neglects of this Duty. What a Floud of Atheiſm, Irreligion, Unbelief, Hypocriſie, Formality, Error, Hereſie, Schiſm, Profaneneſs, and Debaucheries of all kinds, has broken in at this Gap, The Neglect of Family-Government, and Inſtruction? This has made that part of the Chriſtian World that calls it ſelf Reformed; a kind of Hell. Tho' God has yet reſerved to himſelf a little Remnant.

(4.) Family-Reformation and Order is one of the ſpecial Works and Duties of this Day, and God will leaſt bear with the Neglects of that. It is hoped that thoſe Times are even at the Door, when according as the Lord hath both promiſed, and ſworn, *the whole Earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*: Numb. 14. 21. Iſai. 11. 9. when not only the Houſe of *Jacob*, but all the Families of the Nations ſhall be brought to know and acknowledge the Lord. And ſurely if Family-Reformation were more promoted, it would have a Tendency toward; yea, look like the beginning of that great Work. Now we ſhould be like thoſe Men of *Iſſachar*, *who were men that had*

had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 1 Chron. 12. 32.

(5.) God now expects this from you, more especially, who has done more for you than for others. You have been (like *Gideon's* Fleece) wet with the Dew of Heaven, when all the Ground about you has been dry. You have been in a lightsome *Goshen*, others in *Egyptian* Darkness; Darkness that may be felt. You have been watered like Mount *Zion*, others have been like the barren Mountains of *Gilboa*, upon whom no Rain nor Dew descends; and therefore can yield no Fields of Offerings. Yea, you have the Servants of God to direct, assist, and encourage you, not only in the Temple-Work of Publick Worship, but also in making your Private Dwelling-Places Habitations for the God of *Jacob*. Therefore hush all *Objections*, and *Disputes*; up and be Doing, and the Lord will be with you.

Thus I have, as a Spiritual Shepherd, been feeding both the Sheep and Lambs of the Flock. I have urged upon Parents and Governours of Families their Duty, both with respect to themselves, and the Souls under their Charge. I have also admonished Children, Servants, and the Governed Part of Families, what they ought to do: I have suggested Motives unto each, and endeavoured to remove the Objections of all. If any resolve yet to remain obstinate

nate and ungovernable, God himſelf will, ſooner or later, ſpeak to them at another rate than I can do. The Lord hath ſaid, of him who *cometh to enquire of his Prophets, but ſetteth up his Idols in his heart, and putteth the ſtumbling-block of his iniquity before his face*, that he *will anſwer him by himſelf*, Ezek. 14. 7. And to the *froward*, he will *ſhew himſelf froward*, Pſal. 18. 26. But if you will, on all hands, perform your Duty, as you have been directed, God will be glorified, your Miniſters will be comforted over you, and Your Selves may reap the benefit of it, here and hereafter.

I ſhall, finally, leave with you two places of Scripture, and conclude.

Know therefore this day, and conſider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none elſe. ----- Thou ſhalt keep therefore his ſtatutes, and his commandments which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, Deut. 4. 39, 40.

And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet ſhall know that there hath been a Prophet among them, Ezek. 2. 5.

FINIS.